J Happiness Stud
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-9980-4

RESEARCH PAPER

Pursuing Eudaimonic Functioning Versus Pursuing Hedonic Well-Being: The First Goal Succeeds in Its Aim, Whereas the Second Does Not

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Abstract We used a new methodology for assessing change motivation (Hudson and Fraley 2015, 2016) to test the hypothesis that striving to improve one's hedonic well-being fails in its aim, whereas striving to improve one's eudaimonic functioning succeeds. In three studies, participant goals to increase subjective well-being (SWB) were negatively correlated with concurrent SWB, whereas goals to increase relative intrinsic versus extrinsic value orientation (RIEVO) were positively correlated with concurrent RIEVO. In Study 3's longitudinal investigation, Time 1 RIEVO change goals predicted increased RIEVO six and 12 weeks later, whereas Time 1 SWB change goals did not affect longitudinal SWB. Together, the data support the Aristotelian idea that people should pursue eudaimonia rather than happiness, not least because the latter pursuit may not be as effective.

Keywords Subjective well-being · Eudaimonia · Hedonia · Change goals · Eudaimonic activity model

1 Introduction

What kinds of goals and values are most likely to promote a person's growth and happiness? Of course this is a perennial question, long debated by philosophers going back to Aristotle, Epicurus, and Socrates. It is also a question which has been addressed by

This article was prepared within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) and supported within the framework of a subsidy by the Russian Academic Excellence Project '5-100'.

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Published online: 17 March 2018

much empirical research in the last 25 years (Keyes et al. 2002; Vitterso 2016; Huta and Waterman 2014). In the current research we addressed the question in a novel way, using a recently introduced methodology for assessing people's motivations for personal change (Hudson and Fraley 2015, 2016). The main purpose of our research was to show that happiness-promoting and growth-promoting goals are not all the same. We used a new methodology (Hudson and Fraley 2015, 2016) to test the hypothesis that striving to improve one's hedonic well-being fails in its aim, whereas striving to improve one's eudaimonic functioning succeeds. In three studies, participant goals to increase subjective well-being (SWB) were negatively correlated with concurrent SWB, whereas goals to increase relative intrinsic versus extrinsic value orientation (RIEVO) were positively correlated with concurrent RIEVO. In Study 3's longitudinal investigation, Time 1 RIEVO change goals predicted increased RIEVO six and 12 weeks later, whereas Time 1 SWB change goals did not affect longitudinal SWB. Together, the data support the Aristotelian idea that people should pursue eudaimonia rather than hedonia. Goals to improve one's personality and values actually tend to bring about the change they seek, whereas goals to improve one's happiness and well-being may tend to fail in their aims.

1.1 Hedonia Versus Eudaimonia

To unpack this claim it is necessary to consider a central distinction in contemporary positive psychology research, between "hedonia" and "eudaimonia" (Ryan and Deci 2001; Waterman 1993; Huta and Waterman 2014). Hedonia, a concept supposedly originating with the ancient Greek Aristippis, and more recently evidenced in the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, involves feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and enjoyment. Within research psychology, Hedonia is often defined and assessed in terms of subjective well-being (SWB), which combines high positive affect and high cognitive life-satisfaction with low negative affect (Busseri and Sadava 2013; Sheldon and Elliot 1999). SWB is a coherent higher order construct (Busseri 2015) although it can also be broken down into its component factors.

In contrast, eudaimonia, a concept which goes back to Aristotle, involves living a commendable or virtuous life focusing on growth, meaning, authenticity, and excellence (Huta and Waterman 2014). This broad definition invites broad interpretation. For example, Waterman (1993) conceptualized eudaimonia in terms of personal expressiveness, in which deep aspects of the self are given voice. Ryff (1989) conceptualized eudaimonic living in terms of achieving psychological well-being, which encompasses autonomy, mastery, positive relations, growth orientation, purpose, and meaning. Ryan et al. (2013) argued that there three primary facets of eudaimonic living: Pursuing intrinsic goals like growth, intimacy and community rather than extrinsic goals like status, appearance and wealth; behaving in autonomous rather than controlled ways; and being mindful and acting with a sense of awareness. The list could go on, and indeed, a recent search of the literature revealed that the concepts of "eudaimonia" or "eudaimonic well-being" have been operationalized by more than 100 different measurement strategies to date (Sheldon in press; Vitterso 2016).

1.2 The Potential Ineffectiveness of Hedonic Goals

In the Aristotelian view, people readily become confused such that they end up striving directly for feelings of happiness, rather than striving for a virtuous or commendable life. It

is easy to see how this can happen in the modern world, given that American culture, and to some extent western culture, are founded upon "the pursuit of happiness," that memorable phrase inserted by Thomas Jefferson at the last minute into the United States Declaration of Independence. Americans are also said to be obsessed by short-cuts, which they hope will allow them to get what they want (i.e. happiness) immediately. Indeed, many commentators within positive psychology have expressed reservations concerning people's (and the field's) obsession with happiness, proposing that striving for happiness directly is unlikely to work and may even be counter-productive (Lazarus 2003; Mauss et al. 2011; Schooler et al. 2003). Supporting these reservations, in a recent meta-analysis of positive psychology interventions, van Zyl and Rothmann (2014) found that interventions focused directly on happiness tended to be ineffective at bringing about lasting increases in well-being; they may work for a while, but their effects do not persist.

Why might SWB-improvement goals be ineffective? One possibility is that goals of "trying to *feel* something" are likely to be too abstract, too lacking in detail, or too ill-specified (Emmons 1992). SWB change goals may be focused on the wrong thing, namely, an outcome (happiness) that is incumbent upon activity, rather than upon activity itself. Said differently, the state or target of SWB does not directly contain prescriptions or practices for maintaining itself; it is "only a feeling" that resists clear and concrete implementation (cf. Gollwitzer 1999). Moreover, people are quite bad at forecasting how they will feel in the future, a fact which impairs their ability to make happiness-relevant choices (Wilson and Gilbert 2003; Gilbert 2006). In contrast, goals of "trying to *do* something" might reasonably be expected to reach their targets, given that they are more concretely specified and directly reference targeted changes in the world or self.

Another perspective is supplied by Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2012)'s "Hedonic adaptation prevention" (HAP) model, which says that although positive life-changes (like a new car or a new spouse) can temporarily boost SWB, those gains can only be maintained by continued motivated engagement with the change (i.e., we must keep on exploring with the new car, or keep on spending quality time with the new spouse). Because SWB is an affective feeling state, and not a motivational state, it does not connote continuing interaction over time with positive life-changes; rather, it is an outcome of such interactions, should they occur. This does not mean that the actual state of SWB has no effects; SWB provides a good background platform that can promote many different kinds of positive functioning (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). The point is that trying to increase one's positive affect directly, as a focal goal, may be ineffective as a long-term strategy.

Still, some research suggests that attempting to affect one's mood and feelings directly *can* be effective and legitimate. For example, purchasers of Lyubomirsky's (2007) "The how of happiness" accept the premise that they can take action to boost their own SWB, and Lyubomirsky also accepts the premise, in telling them how to do it. People can set and attain goals, they can change their own attitudes, and they can overcome bad habits—all to the apparent benefit of their own mood and satisfaction. Huta and Ryan (2010) showed that hedonic motives can contribute to people's positive affect and life-satisfaction, and Van Tongeren and Burnette (2018) showed that growth-oriented mindsets toward increasing one's happiness are related to greater SWB. In one experimental test, Ferguson and Sheldon (2013) randomly assigned laboratory participants to use a music-listening experience to boost their mood (control condition participants listened to the same music, with no such goal). Experimental participants were successful in this goal, as long as the music was of a type conducive to positive affect (i.e., Aaron Copland, not Igor Stravinsky). These findings are, in a way, unsurprising; why else would people pay so much attention to their

play-lists and their momentary music selections, if these did not provide a reliable means of boosting their own mood or providing themselves with a "picker-upper?"

Thus, the question of whether striving directly for SWB can work (or not) remains a somewhat open question. In the current research we hoped to address this question in a new way, by drawing on a method recently introduced by Hudson and Fraley (2015). Hudson and Fraley asked whether people can change their own personality traits just by desiring, and striving for, such change. They created a measurement technique in which participants are prompted to make two types of ratings: "how much the trait characterizes me now" and also, "whether I would like less, the same, or more, of the trait (pp. 492–493)." The former rating is simply the typical personality measurement strategy employed by the field, whereas the latter rating was construed by Hudson and Fraley (2015) as a measure of people's desire for, and perhaps motivation to work towards, acquiring or losing the referenced feeling or characteristic. The main innovation of the method is that it uses the same item set to assess both the current state ("how I feel right now") and the desired future ("how I am trying to feel in the future"). This matching removes the significant confound that occurs when one item set is used to measure a person's present state and another item set is used to measure their motivations regarding the future. Thus, it affords an intriguing new way to test the effects of various life-orientations upon their own precisely targeted outcomes. Hudson and Fraley's (2015, 2016) longitudinal studies of current and desired (or actual and ideal) big five traits found that the strength of people's Time 1 desires to change particular traits predicted actual change in the targeted traits from the beginning to the end of their longitudinal study, although these changes were not large.

1.3 The Current Studies

In three studies we assessed participants' relative intrinsic versus extrinsic value orientation (RIEVO) as a way of addressing their eudaimonic activity orientation (Ryan et al. 2013), and we also assessed participant's SWB, as a way of addressing their hedonic state. Furthermore, we assessed both constructs *twice*: once in terms of the participant's *current* status, and once in terms of the participant's desire to *change* these characteristics in the future (i.e., to reduce, maintain, or increase the extent to which they possess or display the characteristic). To our knowledge this is the first time that SWB-change motivation has been assessed via the Hudson and Fraley methodology (but see Huta and Ryan 2010, for a somewhat different approach to assessing hedonic motivation). Our general research aim was to compare hedonic motivation (to improve one's SWB) and eudaimonic motivation (to improve one's values) as predictors of their own targets. Do both goals succeed, or does one succeed better than the other? We tested the following hypotheses:

H1 Goals to increase one's RIEVO (i.e., to become more intrinsic and less extrinsic in one's value orientation) should predict actual RIEVO. The RIEVO construct is a good example of what Maslow (1970) termed a being value or "B-value." B-values produce positive and meaningful experiences and are ends in themselves, i.e., the real answer to the question "what makes life worth living?" According to Maslow (1970), B-value motives tend to become stronger the more they are experienced; having seen beauty, harmony, or truth, one does not say "enough," rather, one says "more." Our H1 reasoning predicts that within concurrent data there should be a positive correlation between the measured desire to move towards more RIEVO, and RIEVO itself.

Of course, causality is ambiguous in data derived from a single moment in time; if the H1 prediction comes true, it might be interpreted in various ways. For example, RIEVO change goals might be causing actual RIEVO, consistent with our theorizing; or actual RIEVO may be causing RIEVO change goals, reflecting the Maslow B-value perspective; or a third variable may be causing both. Thus Study 3 instantiated a more powerful test of our theorizing, by attempting to show that time 1 RIEVO change goals predict actual longitudinal change towards greater RIEVO, as observed over successive periods of time. Such a finding would be consistent with Hudson and Fraley's (2015) finding that trait-change goals can predict actual trait-change in the desired direction, extending the motivational pattern beyond traits to a different type of personality construct, namely, eudaimonic values.

H2 In contrast, SWB change goals should be uncorrelated with actual or current SWB, and perhaps even negatively correlated with SWB. SWB change goals may be a good example of people's tendency to confuse causes with outcomes, and their tendency to make the mistake, noted by Aristotle, of striving directly for positive feelings rather than striving for eudaimonic aims. As noted above, SWB is a resting affective and evaluative state of mind, not a motivationally charged state of mind. Simply yearning to be happier is not likely to help people to take the necessary actions to actually change their SWB (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2012). This reasoning implies that within concurrent data there should be no correlation, or possibly even a negative correlation, between the desire to increase SWB and actual current SWB.

Again, however, in a merely cross-sectional study, causality remains ambiguous; if H2 is supported, it might also be interpreted in various ways. Perhaps SWB change goals really do "backfire" and reduce people's SWB over time; or perhaps instead, people who are *already* unhappy simply want more happiness, a seemingly reasonable response. Study 3'slongitudinal design helped distinguish between these possibilities by examining the effects of T1 SWB change goals upon actual SWB, measured at two later times. Unlike the Hudson and Fraley (2015) study which found that big five trait change goals predicted actual change in the desired direction over time, in our study we expected that SWB change goals would *not* predict actual SWB change. However we also expected that RIEVO change goals *would* predict actual RIEVO change.

2 Study 1

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants and Procedure

Participants were 126 introductory psychology students at the University of Missouri, 57 men and 69 women, who participated as part of a course requirement. Their median age was 18 and their dominant ethnicity was Caucasian. After signing up for the study, participants clicked on a link to an internet survey containing the set of measures described below, which came first in a survey that went on to further assessment modules which were unrelated to the current study.

2.1.2 Measures

Values Participants completed the short form (Sheldon and Kasser 2008; Sheldon and Krieger 2014) of the Aspirations index (Kasser and Ryan 1996). Specifically, they rated the importance of six different values, using a 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very much importance) scale. Three of the values are intrinsic (helping, relationships, and personal growth) and three are extrinsic (image, affluence, and popularity). A relative intrinsic versus extrinsic value orientation (RIEVO) score was computed by mean-centering the items (Kasser 2002) then summing the three intrinsic ratings and subtracting the three extrinsic ratings (alpha = .75). This score represents the extent people prioritize intrinsic over extrinsic values. According to Kasser and Ryan (1993), ascribing importance to extrinsic values is not in itself problematic; problems only arise when extrinsic value importance approaches or even exceeds the importance of the more inherently satisfying intrinsic values. Of course, this difference score could also be computed as extrinsic minus intrinsic, but we chose to score it in the eudaimonic direction.

SWB We employed the Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al. 1988) to measure mood, asking "to what extent do you feel this way right now in your life," using a 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scale. The ten positive and ten negative mood items were averaged separately to create positive affect and negative affect scores. We also administered the 5-item Satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin 1985), asking participants to rate their agreement, right now in their lives, with items such as "I am satisfied with my life." A 5-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scale was used. A satisfaction with life score was computed by averaging the five ratings. Also, an aggregate SWB score was computed by standardizing the three variables then subtracting negative affect from the sum of positive affect and life-satisfaction (Diener 1994; Sheldon and Elliot 1999). This was justified by the fact that the three scores typically load on a single factor (negative affect negatively so; Busseri and Sadava 2013), as was found in the current data also (alpha for the 25 item SWB variable, after reversing the 10 negative affect items, was .89).

Change goals Immediately after each current status scale was administered, participants read "below are the same emotion words/characteristics/values. This time, please rate how much you would like to change on each emotion/characteristic/value. Would you like less, the same, or more of this in your life?" A 1 (would like much less of this) to 2 (would like less of this) to 3 (current amount is fine) to 4 (would like more of this) to 5 (would like much more of this) scale was employed. "Motivation to change" scores were computed for each scale, in the same way that "current state" variables were computed above (for the RIEVO change goal, alpha = .78; for the SWB change goal, alpha = .95).

Table 1 Study 1: descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.SWB	4.66	1.64			
2.SWB Goal	5.87	1.80	−.193*		
3.RIEVO	2.13	2.03	.269*	.005	
4.RIEVO Goal	1.06	1.69	.030	−.023	.184*

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

2.2 Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among the major study variables. Supporting H1, stronger RIEVO change goals were associated with greater current RIEVO ($r = .184$, $p = .039$). In contrast, and consistent with H2, stronger SWB change goals were associated with lesser current SWB ($r = -.193$, $p = .031$). Completing the picture, current RIEVO was correlated with current SWB at $r = .269$ ($p < .01$), consistent with past research (Kasser 2002; Kasser and Ryan 1996; Sheldon and Krieger 2014). RIEVO change goals were unrelated to current SWB ($r = .03$, *ns*), and also unrelated to SWB change goals ($r = -.023$, *ns*). SWB change goals were unrelated to current RIEVO ($r = .005$, *ns*).

2.3 Brief Discussion

Study 1 found good initial support for our two hypotheses. Goals to increase intrinsic and reduce extrinsic valuing in life were positively associated with actual endorsement of this value profile (H1), whereas goals to become happier (i.e., to achieve greater SWB) were *negatively* associated with current SWB (H2).

3 Study 2

Study 2 was designed as a simple replication and extension of Study 1. We expected to replicate the Study 1 positive association between RIEVO change goals and RIEVO, and also expected to again find that SWB change goals are not associated with SWB (H1 and H2).

3.1 Methods

Participants were 68 members of an upper level psychology class at the University of Missouri, 23 men and 45 women, who completed an on-line questionnaire for extra course credit. Participants were again mostly Caucasian, with a median age of 21. Participants completed the same RIEVO and SWB items used in Study 1, again assessed as both current states and as change goals. As in Study 1, these items were given at the beginning of a survey that went on to administer unrelated questions. Coefficient alphas for the SWB and RIEVO composites were .91 and .83, and were .93 and .79 for the SWB goal and RIEVO goal composites, respectively.

Table 2 Study 2: descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.SWB	4.39	1.76			
2.SWB Goal	5.46	1.47	−.275*		
3.RIEVO	3.60	2.73	.087	.025	
4.RIEVO Goal	1.49	2.19	.031	.282*	.423*

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

3.2 Results

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among the major study variables. Again supporting H1, stronger RIEVO change goals were associated with greater current RIEVO ($r = .423$, $p < .001$). In contrast, and consistent with H2, stronger SWB change goals were associated with less current SWB ($r = -.275$, $p = .023$). This again suggests that SWB change goals may be ineffective.

3.3 Brief Discussion

Study 2 replicated the intriguing divergence such that value change goals are associated with *higher* levels of the values in question (H1), whereas SWB change goals are associated with *lower* levels of the feelings in question (H2). Taken together, this pattern of results again suggests that SWB change goals may not work, whereas eudaimonic change goals are successful in their aims.

4 Study 3

Still, a huge limitation of Studies 1 and 2 concerns their cross-sectional design. Hudson and Fraley (2015, 2016) conducted longitudinal studies in their research with the change-goal methodology, and thus it was important for us to do the same. The advantage of longitudinal studies is that they can assess whether change goals might actually have dynamic effect, i.e., whether initial change goals are associated with later observed decreases or increases in the targeted personality constructs. That was the primary goal of Study 3, a longitudinal study that assessed participants at three different time points, 6 weeks apart. We hoped to show that initial RIEVO change goals predict actual longitudinal change in RIEVO (an expansion of H1), whereas SWB change goals do not predict increased SWB (an expansion of H2). To test these hypotheses we used multi-level modelling, predicting a significant RIEVO change goal × measurement occasion interaction such that measured RIEVO increases over time as a function of change goals, and SWB does not.

In addition, as a preliminary research goal, Study 3 sought to again replicate the Study 1 and 2 cross-sectional findings, to further evaluate the stability of those findings. We again hypothesized that Time 1 RIEVO and RIEVO change goals would be positively correlated, whereas SWB and SWB change goals would be uncorrelated or negatively correlated (H1 and H2).

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Participants and Procedure

Initial participants were 207 students in an upper level psychology class being offered at the University of Missouri, 69 men and 138 women, who participated for extra course credit. Their median age was 19 and Caucasian was again the dominant ethnicity. Participants completed an in-class questionnaire at the beginning of the semester containing current state and change goal items, for both SWB and RIEVO. The study measures were

administered first as part of a longer assessment. Midway through the semester, approximately 6 weeks later, participants completed an on-line survey which repeated the SWB and RIEVO current state measures. Near the end of the semester, around 12 weeks later, participants completed a third survey which repeated the SWB and RIEVO current state measures. There was considerable subject attrition (only 116 participants completed the third survey). However, attrition analyses comparing participants who completed the study to participants who did not, on the Time 1 RIEVO, SWB, RIEVO change goals, and SWB change goals variables, revealed no significant mean differences, suggesting that the data were missing at random. Thus we used restricted maximum likelihood estimation during multilevel modeling, which allowed for retention of participants with some missing data.

4.1.2 Measures

Current RIEVO and current life-satisfaction, and RIEVO change goals and life-satisfaction change goals, were measured in the same way as in Study 1. However positive and negative affect were measured with shorter scales (Emmons 1991). The positive adjectives were happy, joyful, pleased, cheerful, and enjoyment/fun, while the negative adjectives were sad, worried, frustrated, and upset. As before these were rated twice at Time 1, once concerning the current state, and once concerning desired change in the future. They were also rated again at Time 2 and Time 3 as current state variables. Across the main study variables (T1 SWB, RIEVO, SWB change goals, and RIEVO change goals; T2 SWB and RIEVO; and T3 SWB and RIEVO), alphas ranged from .69 to .93.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Study 1 and 2 Replications

Table 3 contains descriptive statistics and correlations among the major study variables. Recall that H1 predicted a positive concurrent association between eudaimonic change goal variables and the corresponding current state variables. This correlation was again in evidence at Time 1 in the current data. That is, RIEVO change goals were positively associated with actual RIEVO ($r = .168$, $p = .015$). Again, H2 predicted a null or negative concurrent association between SWB change goals and current SWB; this was also in evidence ($r = -.203$, $p = .003$).

Table 3 Study 3: descriptive statistics and zero order correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. RIEVO Goal	.48	.73							
2. SWB Goal	5.74	1.76	.219**						
3. RIEVO T1	.28	.67	.68*	.078					
4. RIEVO T2	.55	1.02	.288**	.127	.533**				
5. RIEVO T3	.59	1.08	.46**	.157	.445**	.562**			
6. SWB T1	4.27	1.74	.024	−.203**	.071	.098	.137		
7. SWB T2	4.32	1.70	.050	−.148	.225**	.128	.163	.654**	
8. SWB T3	4.25	1.67	−.153	−.228*	.147	.166	.189*	.500**	.757**

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

4.2.2 Longitudinal Tests

Next, we examined the longitudinal relationship between the two change goals and actual change in the constructs they referenced. To do this, we constructed two multilevel models in line with Hudson and Fraley's (2015) analyses of longitudinal trait changes as a function of trait change goals over time. All multilevel analyses were conducted with SAS proc mixed. In both models, the characteristic that participants might aspire to change served as the outcome (across three time points), as predicted by the T1 change goal variable, by measurement occasion (1, 2, or 3), and by the change-goal × measurement occasion interaction. In each model, the critical test of change due to goals is this goal × measurement occasion interaction, as it indicates that the relation between the outcome is varying over time at different values of the goal variable. Change goals are Level 2 predictors that are static from T1 onward, and wave is a Level 1 predictor, nested within persons. Measurement occasion was indicated by a continuous variable in which Time 1 = 0, Time 2 = 1, and Time 3 = 2. Thus, coefficients for effects of wave represent how much on average participants increased or decreased on the relevant characteristic between two waves. The coefficient for the interaction terms reflect the extent to which people with relatively high (or low) change goals changed even more (or less) by the subsequent wave:

$$Trait_{ij} = b_0 + b_1(Wave)_{ij} + b_2(Construct\Delta Goal)_j + b_3(TConstruct\Delta Goal)_j(Wave)_{ij} + e_{ij}$$

Parameter estimates for the models are contained in Table 4. For the RIEVO analysis, RIEVO change goals had a positive main effect on actual RIEVO across the three times, extending the concurrent findings. Time of measurement also predicted RIEVO, indicating that RIEVO generally increased across waves, replicating an "intrinsic shift" effect previously reported by Sheldon, Arndt, and Houser-Marko (2003). Most importantly, the measurement occasion effect was strongest in combination with a strong RIEVO change goal (for the RIEVO change goal × measurement occasion interaction, b = .12 [.02, .220], SE = .05, p = .022, see Fig. 1). For the SWB analysis, there was no main effect of measurement occasion upon change in SWB, and also, no SWB change goal x measurement occasion interaction, b = .00 [− .07, .07], SE = .04, p = .903. Instead there was a negative main effect of SWB change goals upon SWB echoing the earlier cross-sectional findings. It appears that endorsing SWB change goals is generally associated with negative SWB, but the lack of interaction with wave indicates that entertaining such goals does not actually make things worse for the person over time.

Finally, we repeated the analyses while looking for construct crossover effects, such that the change goals we entered to predict changes in goal-irrelevant outcomes (e.g., SWB change goals predicted RIEVO). There were no significant interaction effects, both $ps > .05$. That is, SWB change goals did not predict change in RIEVO over time, and RIEVO change goals did not predict change in SWB over time; only RIEVO change goals had impact, and only by strengthening the trend towards greater RIEVO over time.

4.3 Brief Discussion

Study 3 replicated the major cross-sectional findings of Studies 1 and 2 and also added a longitudinal component, showing that RIEVO change goals predicted increased RIEVO six and 12 weeks later, whereas SWB change goals did not predict later changes in SWB. This supports and clarifies the general pattern observed in these studies.

Table 4 Coefficients for the two multi-level models of change

Predictor	Change in RIEVO						Change in SWB					
	b	SE	*t*	*p*	Lower 95% CI of b	Upper 95% CI of b	b	SE	*t*	*p*	Lower 95% CI of b	Upper 95% CI of b
Intercept	.22	.07	3.19	.002	.09	.36	5.45	.39	13.93	.001	4.68	6.22
Goal	.18	.08	2.28	.023	.03	.34	−.21	.07	−3.15	.002	−.33	−.08
Time	.11	.05	2.39	.018	.02	.21	−.05	.21	−.24	.809	−.46	.36
Goal × Time	.12	.05	2.30	.022	.02	.22	.00	.04	.12	.903	−.07	.07

N = 207. RIEVO = relative intrinsic to extrinsic value orientation. SWB = subjective well-being

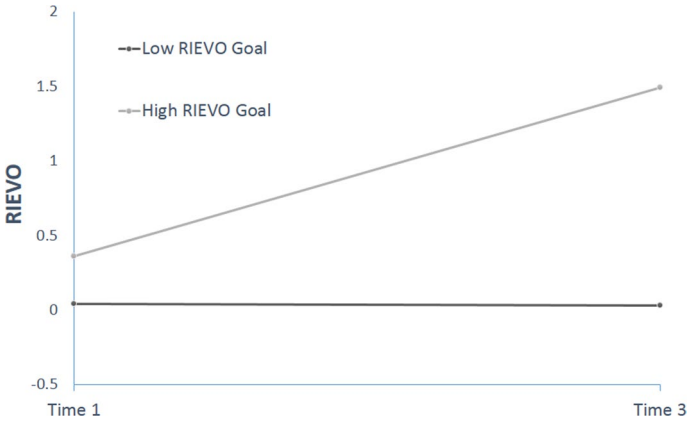

Fig. 1 Illustration of the growth trajectories of RIEVO associated with the RIEVO change goal

4.4 General Discussion

Across three studies, our data supported our proposition that goals oriented towards eudaimonic functioning can actually help people to change in the desired direction, whereas goals oriented towards subjective well-being do not work as well. In all three studies, rated desires to increase one's subjective well-being were significantly *negatively* correlated with concurrent subject well-being, whereas rated desires to increase one's intrinsic valuing were significantly *positively* correlated with concurrent RIEVO. Study 3's longitudinal investigation clarified the meaning of these patterns, by showing that adopting SWB change goals does not actually cause people to lose SWB. More likely is that these negative correlations simply indicate that unhappy people would like to improve their condition, just as people not getting their psychological needs met are motivated to improve their level of need-satisfaction (Sheldon 2011). Study 3 was able to assess the longitudinal relationship between change goals and actual change, merely finding that SWB change goals do not bring about any increase in SWB over time; they appeared to be functionally inert. In contrast, RIEVO change goals not only positively predicted *concurrent* RIEVO, they also predicted *increasing* RIEVO over time (the significant RIEVO change goal x measurement occasion interaction). Thus, goals to improve one's eudaimonic profile can actually bring about the outcomes that they desire, as measured at a later point in time.

Returning to the question that began this article, of "What kinds of goals and values are most likely to promote a person's growth and happiness?" Our results suggest that promoting happiness may not be at all the same thing as promoting positive functioning, and that the two concepts should be distinguished, since goals related to improving one's values succeeded in their aim, whereas goals related to happiness (aka SWB) did not. Notably, Sheldon's "Eudaimonic Activity Model" (EAM; 2014, 2016, in press) asserts that SWB can only be achieved indirectly, via growth-promoting activities whose satisfactions eventually produce greater SWB. The current finding, that SWB change goals do not actually bring enhanced SWB, are predictable from the EAM. Notably, the current results have not pinpointed any new factors that produce enhanced SWB. However, we presume based on past findings (Kasser 2002; Niemiec et al. 2009; Sheldon et al. 2017) that succeeding in becoming more oriented towards intrinsic (intimacy, community, growth) values and less

oriented towards extrinsic (money, status, appearance) values will bring improved SWB, at least in the longer-term. Indeed, Huta and Ryan (2010) found in an intervention study that both hedonic and eudaimonic interventions had short-term effects, but only the eudaimonic intervention had longer-term effects.

An additional discussion issue concerns the "Hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities" (HEMA) research of Huta and colleagues (Huta 2013; Huta and Waterman 2014; Huta and Ryan 2010). Huta and Ryan (2010) found that both hedonic and eudaimonic behavioral motivations provided benefits to participants, benefits which were both somewhat overlapping and somewhat distinct. Thus they recommended that people pursue both eudaimonia and hedonia, i.e., both meaning and pleasure. Similarly, Peterson et al. (2005) found that having a pleasure-orientation towards happiness was positively associated with happiness. How can these findings be reconciled with our finding that SWB change goals do not succeed in their aim? Scrutinizing the HEMA items yields one possible answer: the five hedonic motivation items were: seeking to take it easy, seeking fun, seeking enjoyment, seeking pleasure, and seeking relaxation. These items imply being active in one's attempts to both enjoy life (pursue intrinsic motivations, enjoyable activities), and to cope with life's stresses (seek relaxation, to take it easy). They reflect motivations and strategies about how to live life well. In contrast, rating PANAS items as to whether one wants more or less of particular feelings is more abstract, and such ratings and desires are less likely to be associated with relevant behaviors and strategies. Also, higher ratings on our SWB change items may reflect a tangible feeling of deficiency or absence, as suggested by the negative cross-sectional correlations found between SWB change goals and SWB in all 3 studies. This factor may work against any positive benefit that might accrue from hedonic motivation conceptualized in alternative ways, such as in the ways specified by the Orientations towards Happiness scale or the HEMA scale. Finally, similar to our SWB change items, the items in the Mauss et al. (2011) "Valuing happiness" scale may too-directly implicate salient feelings of unhappiness ("If I don't feel happy, maybe there is something wrong with me" and "I am concerned about my happiness even when I feel happy"). This may explain the typical negative association of the Mauss scale with SWB (Mauss et al. 2011). Future research can perhaps combine the various methods for assessing hedonic motivation within a single study or set of studies, to determine whether some kinds of hedonically oriented activities can actually succeed in their aims, and how (Ferguson and Sheldon 2013).

These studies have many limitations. One limitation is our reliance on the PANAS, which primarily assesses high-activation positive affect. Results may not generalize to lower-activation positive emotions, such as calmness, peacefulness, and contentedness. Another study limitation concerns the mere 3 wave 12 week design of Study 3. Hudson and Fraley (2015) did a more thorough job of assessing whether personality changed, by using daily diary and experience sampling methodologies during the period of striving, and by examining potential mediators of the change process, such as implementation intentions. Thus future research could build on our results by strengthening the assessment of behavioral and personality change, perhaps going beyond self-report data by soliciting reports from informants who are able to observe participant's behavior over time. Yet another study limitation is the fact that only college student samples from Missouri were employed, with rather small samples. Although there is no compelling reason to think that the results would have been different with different-aged samples, or samples from different regions or countries, such generalizability remains to be demonstrated, as well as generalizability across factors such as student's parent, family, educational, and relationship status. Also, we did not conduct repeated measures of change goals themselves, so our studies cannot

test changes in motivation, which are likely to have important downstream effects. Finally, simply participating in a study in which one's change goals are first assessed might stimulate a desire for self-change in participants, a desire which may not have been there otherwise. Still, the study was not advertised as a study of self-change, and thus there should be no self-selection bias. Also, in their ratings, many participants did not show a desire to change themselves, indicating that no strong demand effect was in place.

To conclude, these three studies highlight the importance of keeping feeling-based constructs and functioning-based constructs separate within our theorizing and data collections. Practically, our results suggest that striving directly for improved happiness, as the American ideology might tempt people to do, may not work. Instead of looking for shortcuts to happiness, it appears that people should focus on becoming the best person they can be, trusting that happiness will emerge as a side effect of this life-long process.

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